GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3917
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2005
REVIEWING PERMISSION FOR BT COTTON
Rawale Shri Mohan

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) had recently held a meeting to review the permission granted to Monsanto-Mahyco Biotech BT. Cotton variety;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

(c) whether the Government is aware that several Non-Governmental Organisations /Voluntary Organizations have opposed Monsanto-Mahyco BT. Cotton variety due to its failure in increasing crop yield;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(e) the action taken against Monsanto-Mahyco Biotech in this connection; and

(f) the measures taken by the Government to provide relief/ compensation to the farmers who have suffered for yield losses?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND F0RESTS (SHRI. NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) & (b) The GEAC in its meeting held on 3.5.2005 decided to renew the permission for commercial cultivation of MECH 12 Bt, MECH 162 Bt and MECH 184 Bt for the Central Zone (Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra) and MECH 162 Bt and MECH 184 Bt for Southern Zone (Karnataka and Tamil Nadu). The GEAC did not renew its permission for commercial cultivation of MECH 12 Bt, MECH 162 Bt and MECH 184 Bt in respect of Andhra Pradesh.

(c) The GEAC has received representations from some NGOs alleging failure of the Bt crop in Andhra Pradesh in general and Warangal district in particular due to lesser yield and higher disease infestation.

(d) Bt gene has been introduced in the cottonseed specifically to control bollworm infestation only. It would therefore not eliminate the crop management requirements for control of other pests or diseases. The yield potential of any hybrid depends on the type of germplasm and is virtually the same for both Bt and its non-Bt counterpart. However, the yield in Bt cotton is higher than its non-Bt counterpart because of the inbuilt resistance to bollworm, which protects the developing bolls from the pest attack. Therefore there is no evidence of failure of Bt technology.

(e) Does not arise in view of reply to (d).

(f) The issue of compensation / relief to the farmers, if any, is decided by the State Governments in the light of their respective legislations.